

City of Lincoln
Telecommunications/Cable Television Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes – August 25, 2015

Members Present: Andy Beecham, Steve Eggland, Rebecca Henderson, Ed Hoffman, Jim Johnson, Laurie Thomas Lee, Helen Meeks, John Neal, Art Zygielbaum

Members Absent (excused): Paul Barnett

City Staff: Diane Gonzales, Steve Huggenberger, Jamie Wenz, David Young

Time Warner Cable and authorized representatives: Bill Austin, Robert Deck, Jared Falk, Tyler Hedrick

Windstream/Kinetic and authorized representatives: Scott Barnett, Brad Hedrick

Other: Glen Oliver

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm by chair Ed Hoffman. Hoffman made note of the copy of the Open Meetings Act at the back of the room. Board members and guests introduced themselves.

Review of Agenda

Chair Ed Hoffman asked if anyone had changes for the agenda which had been previously distributed; agenda was approved.

Minutes

Minutes from the June 4 board meeting were presented. Minutes were corrected to show that chair Ed Hoffman had been absent (excused absence) and that vice-chair Art Zygielbaum had presided in his place. John Neal moved approval of the minutes as corrected, Andy Beecham seconded; motion passed 9-0.

Old Business

Creation of online form for complaints

Gonzolas reported; she has had a very productive meeting with John Neal and Andy Beecham.

They plan to bring a prototype to our October meeting.

Will have a complaint form.

Will also offer a survey question - how do they rate their service.

Hoffman: There has been discussion of what constitutes a complaint. We would like to see more than just people that send in a mailed letter; would like to have reports of emails and phone calls. Hoffman hopes this will allow people to have a different type of reporting.

Fiber subcommittee

Fiber Subcommittee chair Art Zygielbaum distributed a document of points which had been discussed by the subcommittee. Document title *Lincoln Telecomm 21: A view of a 21st Century telecommunications system for the City of Lincoln*.

Hoffman prefaced the discussion by saying that there may be some items that people have problems with.

Zygielbaum said that this was a general discussion of goals. Some are realistic, some may not be; there is plenty of room for discussion.

Zygielbaum discussed the Premise and Goals sections of the document. He said that once the board decides which of these pieces we like, we can modify as needed, and go forward from there.

Hoffman asked David Young to discuss what the availability of fiber would mean to households in the City. Young introduced himself; he's the Fiber Infrastructure and Right of Way Manager for the City. Young said that he would start very briefly with the fiber that has been installed by the City. We have added six new providers recently. The City has 320 miles of conduit in the ground, 80 miles of abandoned pipe in waterways etc which could be used. The City has tried to make it easier for private businesses to put

fiber through. We have used five out of six available spaces. We are reserving the last space for what may be a grander vision. The City feels that people in all areas of Lincoln should have access; this includes the "brownfield" and not just the "greenfield."

The City believes that competition is a good thing. One of our partners is currently offering 12 MB/second service, the other is offering 4 MB/second. The FCC defines broadband as 25 MB/second; we would like for Lincoln to move forward. We would like to see something like Google Fiber move into Lincoln.

Hoffman asked Young to explain connectivity; what does it mean to say 12 MB/sec, 4 MB/sec, 25 MB/sec, 100 MB/sec? Hoffman has four children that do most of their shopping by phone and believes that the younger generation expects quick connections. Young said that we need to understand that the largest part of our city's population should have access to 100 MB/sec. Laurie Thomas Lee said that 100 MB/sec in residential areas is a lofty goal. Young said that we don't aim low. We are trying to get young people who crave their phone service. As we well know, the answer is not that we shouldn't do it, it's a question of how we should do it effectively. Young said that one way to do it is through public/private partnership, but public ownership is something that could also be considered.

Lee commented that getting this kind of service into residential areas would require digging through people's yards; people don't like their lawn digged up. Young agreed that there is a problem getting it done. We would probably be partially serviced by aerial connectivity. Lee asked if the City has considered wireless. Young said that we have worked with some wireless. The most economical option would be unlicensed wireless; however that's subject to interference because anyone can use it. Licensing bands have been taken by existing operators; we could get some light licenses. The benefit of fiber is that it's enclosed; we wouldn't get interference. Hoffman asked about the Wireless experiment that the City ran in Iron Horse Park. Young said that we ran a project last summer to supply wireless in Iron Horse Park. The service saw 6500 unique visitors in a 120 day period; average connection time was 12 minutes. Hoffman said that he was in Japan and South Korea recently, and wireless was available everywhere. Zygielbaum agreed that wireless is nice, but we don't want to lose sight of the fiber. If we don't increase bandwidth then we will be running out of bandwidth. In Nebraska we are very used to public services, such as public power. There are options; we can do a public/private partnership.

Young said that we want a fiber system in every home and business in the City. The goal of providing a neutrally hosted system where all providers are treated equally is very important. We have a very good relationship with businesses; now is the time to turn to providing service to residential users. Hoffman asked about issues with regard to preemption in federal law and state law. He said that the questions which Lee was asking are very fair because they go to practicalities; however he believes that young people see this as necessary as water. John Neal said that every LPS student will have a connection to connect wirelessly, and resources from outside of the school. Families are starting to see while they're connecting from outside that there are resources, not just games and videos. He cannot announce the LPS student count at this time because it's not public, but LPS was estimating 40,000 at the beginning of the year.

Eggland asked what funding options are available. Zygielbaum said that we should avoid that for the moment; there are options but first you decide what you want. You don't build a house by deciding that you want red brick; some of the options are more expensive than others. Young said that there are many ways to get funding; you can't choose the options of funding before you know which way to go. 20 other communities are doing it right now. It would be a big project, and we would have to go across people's yards. We don't dig a big trench across people's yards; it's about an inch thick. Hoffman said that it depends on what we want to see; Ideas can lead to other ideas. Competition is something that we need to have, and we have to figure out how to get there. This is being done in other communities, inside and outside the United States.

Young said that the City wants to hear from the board. This Internet thing is probably going to stay around for awhile; how do we get to a place where 20 years from now we won't be sitting the same place we are today.

Meeks said she wants the infrastructure there. But from a consumer perspective, would there be consumer choice that is subsumed under one of these areas. Zygielbaum agreed. He said if you have a big water pipe in your house, you can choose which service you want. You don't have to pay for the whole thing unless you want it. Lee asked if this discussion is just about providing infrastructure, as opposed to content; Zygielbaum said yes.

Young, addressing Meeks' question, said that the way Internet is provided over fiber generally is over VLAN. More and more people share the same piece of fiber and they run their services over it.

Hoffman asked what size tube we would need to place through people's yards. Young said that there is a company out of Wisconsin that sells tubes. It's the size of your middle finger; they dig a hole with a series of little knives up to your house. Hoffman commented that the level of intrusion is less than a sprinkler company. Zygielbaum and Young agreed.

Young said that the board would have to decide how to approach things like this. Meeks said that it's a give and take; she wouldn't like to have someone dig through her petunias, but she would like the infrastructure. She wants to make sure that the consumer perspective is there while we're discussing this. Zygielbaum said that the fiber probably won't change much over the next 20-30 years; the machines on both ends will change. We are building for the future. Hoffman said that the subcommittee wants direction from the board, and is also waiting for input from the Mayor's office. Lee said that historically, the cable companies found that there was a way to do it; not all homes wanted cable service but the infrastructure got built. However a wireless system is now in place; she asked if wireless is not the 21st century solution and fiber the 20th century solution. Young said that we've discussed this, he doesn't necessarily disagree. The question is today or tomorrow. Wireless has its own spectrum. Are we going to build something today that will last for 40-50 years until wireless allows more options? Young agrees that wireless will eventually pass fiber; just doesn't think it will happen in the near future. Zygielbaum agrees that wireless is necessarily on several levels. Hoffman said that wireless is in competition with cable, not with fiber optic. We have to provide competition and the highest level of connectivity that we can. Beecham said he appreciates the opportunity to have a role in what's going on in the future. There is a lot of stuff going on in Lincoln. Many of those things were a result of an economic study that was done 10 years ago and presenting the results to the community. Where we are 10 years later is that we have achieved many of those things. Those who are watching what's going on know that a followup study was done, and concluded that Lincoln must have fiber provided to the home. The Mayor a few weeks ago indicated that fiber to the home is an important goal for his administration. There are a lot of people that are going to be coming together to discuss Lincoln's future; fiber to the home is a big goal.

New Business

There were no items of New Business at this meeting.

Time Warner Cable report

Tyler Hedrick reported for LCC TV/Public Access: Total hours are down a little bit; they have removed some from the channel due to inactivity. However there are two new producers. Hoffman asked if there has been any efforts to get the word out to the public. Hedrick said not by the studio.

Jarad Falk had no prepared remarks. Regarding the proposed merger with Charter, the FCC hasn't yet started their 180 day clock. They plan to offer Broadband speed when the merger is complete. Lee asked if we should expect Charter to come forward at some point and talk to the board. Falk said that they have reached out, for instance to Councilman Fellers. Huggenberger said that the City hasn't received a transfer request yet. Falk said that one has been prepared and we should have received it. Huggenberger will call the attorney to see if he can track it down.

Regarding public fiber, Falk said that he believes that if there were a market for it, he believes that a company would come in and serve it. Hoffman asked, since Falk also represents Time Warner Cable in Kanas City, what kind of connectivity level they have in KC. Falk said that KC has 1 GB service. One has to consider what happens to the population that gets left behind; he thinks that there are areas that are underserved because they can't afford it. Charter will work with Brighthouse to get connectivity as part of this merger. Need to define what speed do you want. He thinks the 25 MB speed was just a monkey wrench thrown in by the FCC. Falk doesn't believe that fiber to the home is the end-all be-all. Falk thinks that what Charter will offer is better than what the City is discussing. Google is changing the map; other companies are moving to faster speeds. Technology is changing very rapidly. There are opportunity costs; what would the City give up if we did this? Sewer, roads?

Windstream/Kinetic report

Brad Hedrick said that the Public Access channel has come online at Kinetic since the last meeting. All the PEG channels are on their system.

He wants to clear up some misconceptions with respect to businesses. There are three providers: TWC, Windstream, and Unite. Windstream has thousands of business customers with speeds from 10 MB up to 10 Gig. A week from today they will offer prime service with choices of 50 MB, 75 MB, and 100 MB. Don't discount the fiber to the node option. Windstream and Time-Warner Cable as providers are responding to businesses and bringing the services to Lincoln. Backbone network will be available by the end of the year. There is a ton of information out on the Internet. He will be happy to provide us with information that the City of Seattle found out when they did a study. Hoffman asked him to do that; he will send to Gonzolas. Hoffman commented that we are tasked with looking to the future. Hedrick said that Windstream/Kinetic has looked at providing service to the City. Zygielbaum asked if the

new service would be limited to the same footprint as for Kinetic. Hedrick said it's not the same footprint but it's DSL service and is therefore not available to the whole community either.

City Report:

Jamie Wenz reported that the City got to work with Nebraska Sports Council to do nightly stories on the State Games of America. We got really good feedback from students and professors at the University. Really good service from Pinnacle Bank Arena. Partnered with Channels 10/11 to get a feed from Ralston through their sister station, WOWT in Omaha.

They have included a budget request to allow for HD programming on the studio downstairs.

Sports on next meeting's agenda. TWC is getting charged a rights fee this year.

Channel 10: Grant for their health & wellness channel was approved for 2 years.

Channel 10 has a steering committee. If anyone is interested in being on it, contact Diane Gonzolas.

Zygielbaum commented that the bylaws on the website should probably be updated to include information about the new direction of the board, also need information about Windstream/Kinetic.

Public Comments

Glen Oliver, 6620 Knox Street, reported that he has had a cable problem for a year and a half. In about 2010, he bought a new TV. Had a warranty. Started having problems with signal. Ignored it for a long time, didn't know what it was. Took the TV back to Schaefer's, they sent him to Sperry. Sperry told him they thought it was a board in the back of the TV. They told him it had to be the box. Sperry sent him a loaner, had the same problem. TWC told him that it had to be the line coming into the house. TWC assigned a technician, tried to time it with someone else having the same problem. Over 100 instances in about 10 months. When the warranty was about to run out, he started recording everything. Hoffman suggested that Mr. Oliver talk to Jarad Falk and see if the problem can get fixed better. Also asked him to discuss with Gonzolas.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Johnson, secretary